

REMARKS

Claims 1-7 are pending. Claim 1 is the sole independent claim.

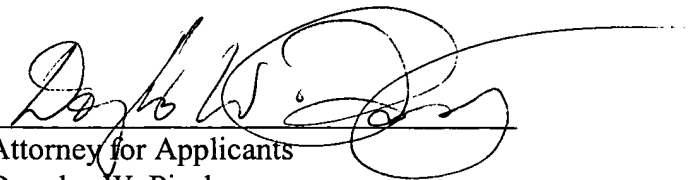
Claims 1-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S.

Patent Application Publication No. 2004-0165028 (*Ito et al.*). Without conceding the propriety of the rejection, in order to expedite allowance, Applicants are submitting herewith a sworn English-language translation of Japanese Patent Application No. 2000-270226 (filed September 6, 2000 in the parent of the subject application), which is the priority application for the subject application, in order to perfect Applicants' claim to priority for the subject application. Since the filing date of the priority application (September 6, 2000) is prior to the effective filing date of *Ito et al.* (August 21, 2001), *Ito et al.* is no longer available as prior art. Accordingly, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102 is moot, and all of the pending claims are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection and an early Notice of Allowance are respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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